

Granite Paper Mill
6900 Big Cottonwood Canyon Road
Salt Lake City
Salt Lake County
Utah

HABS No. U-39
HABS
UTAH.
18 SALC
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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GRANITE PAPER MILL

Location: 6900 Big Cottonwood Canyon Road, Salt Lake City,
Salt Lake County, Utah
Latitude: 40° 37' 37" N Longitude: 111° 47' 57" W

Present Owner: J. B. & R. E. Walker Inc.
c/o Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Walker
5089 Cottonwood Lane
Salt Lake City, Utah

Present Occupant: Old Mill Sportmen's Club

Present Use: Private Club

Statement of
Significance: This Paper mill was the first to be built for that
purpose in Salt Lake County, for the Deseret News
and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,
as a means of attaining self-sufficiency from the paper
manufacturers of the east.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

Elizabeth Livingston, April 13, 1881
Deseret News Corp., October 9, 1884
Granite Paper Mills Co., October 11, 1892
Big Cottonwood Power Co., December, 1892
Union Light & Power Co., November 15, 1897
Utah Light & Railway Co., December 1910
Emeretta C. Smith
Old Mill Tavern Inc., May 1927
J. B. & R. E. Walker, Inc., March 24, 1949

2. Date of erection: 1883-1884

3. Architect-builder: Henry Grow

4. Original plan and construction: Built of granite discarded from the building of the Salt Lake Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. A hundred foot elevator tower with a mansard roof embellished the mill.

5. Alterations and additions: After a disastrous fire on April 1, 1893, the mill was abandoned until Spring, 1927, when it was rehabilitated and remodeled for club use by the Old Mill Tavern Inc.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

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The mill was built to meet the need for newsprint for the Deseret News, a Salt Lake City newspaper, and for dissemination of religious literature for the LDS Church. A small mill had been originally set up in an old sugar factory in Salt Lake, but its inefficiency resulted in days when the newspaper could not be published. In the late 1870's, Thomas Howard, a Welsh papermaker, proposed to Brigham Young that a larger mill be built which would utilize the power of the canyon creeks from the Wasatch Mountains. (Mr. Howard was born in 1815 in Wales, and learned papermaking from his father, who ran several paper mills. He arrived in Salt Lake Valley on October 1, 1851, and worked at the production of paper for the LDS Church in various makeshift facilities.) The decision to build a new mill came about as a desire to attain self sufficiency from the undependable paper shipments from the east. Church President John Taylor and his twelve apostles, with Charles J. Lambert visited the canyons and on May 23, 1879 it was decided to build the mill near the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon, about 13 miles southeast of Salt Lake City. One hundred and ten acres of land were purchased, including water rights for manufacture and power needs. There was also an 8-acre piece of land that once had a brewery on it. Land was cleared, and construction began in October, 1881. The building of the granite structure took nearly three years to complete, including the installation of the old machinery from the sugar mill as well as the new improved equipment. It was called the New Granite Paper Mill or the Deseret News Mill. Henry Grow, designer of the Salt Lake Tabernacle roof, was architect and builder of the \$150,000 facility. The granite used in its walls was quarried nearby, and set with mortar of clay and stone grindings. A 1500 foot race brought water through a penstock to three encased turbines for power. The mill began operations in April, 1883, and at the time of peak production it turned out five tons of paper per day.

For a while, all went well, and on March 31, 1893 the mill completed its most successful run of fine manila stock.

Because of bad weather the paper inventory on hand was four times normal, since the wagons could not manage the heavy loads over the soft roads. Superintendent Lambert told his thirty-some workers that the following day, April Fools Day (a Saturday) would be an extra holiday. Early the following morning, Mr. Lambert was awakened in Salt Lake City by the telephoned message that the mill had burned down and was a total loss. It was not rebuilt as a mill, and the burnt shell lay idle until 1927, when some roof portions were replaced, some fire damaged walls were removed, and it was converted into a recreation building. Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Walker have been owners and operators of the Old Mill Club since 1949.

C. Sources of Information:

Bibliography:

Beatty, Wm., Early Papermaking in Utah.

Carter, Kate B., Heart Throbs of the West, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Vol. 11, 1950.

Deseret News, August 20, 1960.

Deseret News, September 26, 1966.

Salt Lake City Illustrated, S. W. Darke Co., Salt Lake City, 1887. Includes a drawing of the Granite Paper Mill.

Salt Lake Tribune, July 24, 1927.

Prepared by John L. Giusti, AIA
September 5, 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: The Granite Paper Mill typifies early Utah industrial architecture.
2. Condition of fabric: The Granite Paper Mill burned in 1893 and only the granite walls remain intact. In 1927 the north wing was renovated as a recreation building. Both the original walls and the modern renovation are in good condition. The south wing remains gutted and serves as an outdoor dance area.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: An east-west 115' x 66' rectangle of three stories intersects with a north-south 107' x 56' rectangle to form an L. There is an 11' x 11' tower at the intersection.
2. Foundations: Coursed gray granite ashlar.
3. Wall construction, finish, and color: Grey coursed granite ashlar, set with mortar of clay and stone grindings.
4. Structural system, framing: Masonry walls support timber framing. The present wood frame was added in 1927, the original having burned in 1893.
5. Porches: None remain.

6. Chimneys: The heavy brick chimney on east side is modern.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: There are three types of doorways. Openings intended for double doors are arched, either round or segmental. There is a segmental arch over a single door opening in the south wing; otherwise single openings have heavy timber or granite lintels.
- b. Windows and shutters: With the exception of a segmental arch over a third floor north window, all window openings in the north wing have granite lintels and those in the ruined south wing have heavy timber lintels.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Present gabled roof replaces the similar original roof.
- b. Cornice, waves: None remain from the original structure.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A modern hipped roof replaces the original mansard roof of the hundred foot tower.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: Original plans are not available. Presently the south wing, open to the sky, is used as an outdoor dance floor. The north wing has restrooms, furnace room, and entry space on the first floor; a two-and-a-half story dance hall, a bar, offices and restrooms at the second level, an apartment at the second floor mezzanine, and party rooms and an indoor archery range on the third floor.
- 2. Stairways: The modern stairway is located on the south side of the north wing.
- 3. Flooring: Was wood, burned in 1893.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are and presumably were exposed gray granite ashlar.
- 5. Doorways and doors: The original doorways are topped either by keyed arches or by heavy timber lintels. No original doors remain.
- 6. Lighting, type of fixtures: Modern electric fixtures are now used.
- 7. Heating: Furnace was installed in 1927. The original heating is not known. The fireplace in the north wing is modern.

D. Site and Surroundings:

The front of the building faces Big Cottonwood Canyon road to the west and the building is near the west boundary of the site. Entry is beneath the tower on this side. Big Cottonwood Creek runs on the west of the site, contributing to the rural character of the area.

Prepared by C. W. Barrow, Jr.
September 6, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA (Texas Tech University), assisted by Project Historian John Giusti, AIA (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah) and Donald G. Prycer, (Texas A. & M. University).